



METRO NASHVILLE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

**DISCOVER NASHVILLE**

“If you keep a building in use, you’re saving energy and conserving resources. That’s what people mean when they call preservation the ultimate recycling.”

RICHARD MOE, NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

# METROPOLITAN HISTORICAL COMMISSION



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Sunnyside in Sevier Park  
3000 Granny White Pike  
Nashville, Tennessee 37204

[www.nashville.gov/mhc](http://www.nashville.gov/mhc)

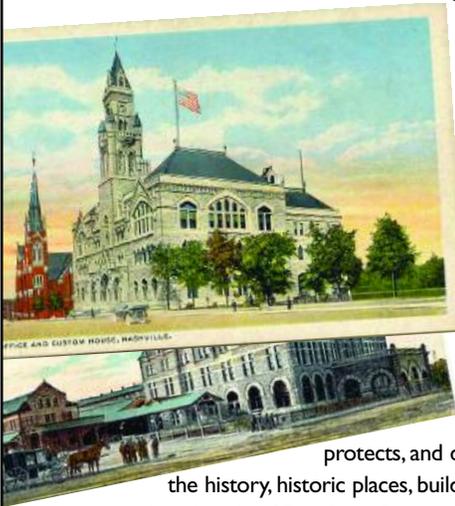
Preserving A Sense Of Nashville’s History

# SUSTAINABILITY

## Going green

### Reduce, reuse, recycle...

As we enter the twenty-first century, these have become watchwords for almost all Americans. But what do these issues have to do with history and preservation? Nashville's Metropolitan Historical Commission and Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission work together to preserve the past through the preservation and reuse of our historic buildings.



The Metropolitan Historical Commission is a municipal historic preservation agency working to document history, save and reuse the built environment, and make the public more aware of the necessity and advantages of preservation. The MHC preserves, protects, and documents

the history, historic places, buildings, and neighborhoods of Davidson County through education, technical assistance, and advocacy. The commission is composed of fifteen citizens of Davidson County who are appointed by the mayor. It was created in 1966 and has operated with a professional staff since 1973.

The Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission is the municipal agency responsible for administration of historic zoning regulations in the historic zoning and conservation zoning districts across the county. The MHZC is made up of nine members, appointed by the mayor and meeting the requirements set out by the State of Tennessee. The MHZC was created in 1978, with the designation of Edgefield as the city's first historic zoning district.

### ***A Sense of History***

At the Metro Historical Commission, we work to save Nashville's history through the documentation and preservation

of significant historical resources. We work to keep history alive – to keep the past an active, productive part of the present.

### ***The Built Environment***

To ensure that the past is not lost but remains an integral part of life in Davidson County, the MHC works primarily with a special resource – the built environment.

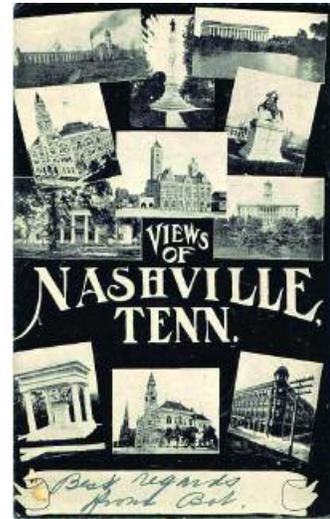
Buildings are a valuable record of history – expressions of the artistic and practical life of earlier times. A community's built environment reflects the progression of people and lifestyles which created it.

Nashville is blessed with historic buildings which are a visible record of the history of our city, state, and nation. Places such as the State Capitol, The Hermitage, Jubilee Hall, and the Ryman Auditorium are certainly in the history books. They teach our children, bring tourists, and connect all of us to our community's past. Buildings and districts

don't have to be of the stature of those landmarks to be important and worth saving. Preservation brings more to a city than a historical record. Preservation is actually very practical and part of life today. Preservation is housing, community revitalization, economic development, environmental responsibility, tourism. In the simplest terms, it means continuing to use resources which already exist.

The MHC encourages the preservation and productive use of the built environment, not by blindly trying to save every building that is old, but by carefully considering the lessons of history and the value of yesterday's buildings for us in the present and for those who come after us.

We are actively involved in historic preservation, working to define and realize the best present and future use for the built environment in Davidson County.



## ***Research & Documentation***

Research is a basic part of many of our projects. Topics range from one window detail to entire neighborhoods. We research the history behind buildings to discover how they looked originally and when and why alterations were made. We photograph sites and buildings of all ages to record how Davidson County looked in the past and how that appearance has changed. We survey neighborhoods, researching and evaluating those areas with concentrations of older buildings, looking at architectural and historical significance. Thorough research leads to accurate restorations, successful National Register nominations, the establishment of historic districts, and accurate and informative publications and presentations.



## ***Outreach & Education***

We work to make people more aware of Nashville's history, the value of older buildings, and the impact that the built environment can have. We emphasize the necessity of preservation through publications, historical markers, and special events. Our publications include an on-line e-newsletter; technical pamphlets, brochures about historic sites, and design guidelines for historic districts. Through our marker program, we recognize historically significant sites as worthy of individual attention. Our special events include assistance with the organization and promotion of tours of historic buildings and neighborhoods. Since 1981, we have co-sponsored the Nashville Conference on African-American History and Culture, and for over thirty years, our annual Architectural Awards program has recognized excellent examples of quality preservation work throughout the county.

## ***Neighborhood Preservation***



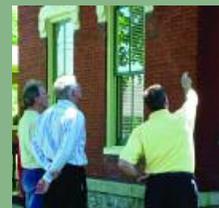
Recognizing the special potential of groups of historic buildings, both residential and commercial, we give particular attention to neighborhoods and districts, encouraging the care and use of older buildings in the midst of growth and change. Our research has led to the designation of several National Register historic districts as well as many neighborhoods seeking protection through the historic zoning or conservation zoning process.

## ***Technical Assistance***

We offer technical assistance to people interested in the maintenance and renovation of historic buildings – from a small single-family house to a multi-story office building. Our research and resource materials enable us to offer sound advice on historic preservation work. We have expertise in architectural styles and construction methods and can help those planning preservation projects avoid problems along the way.

## ***Preservation Projects***

The MHC helps to develop design and financial strategies for the adaptive reuse of significant architectural resources owned by the city; we then supervise the restoration work at those properties by partnering with other Metro agencies. Success stories include the Customs House and Union Station, as well as more recent projects at Fort Negley, the Nashville City Cemetery, Warner Parks, and Omohundro Water Works.



*“The greatest use of life is to spend it for something that will outlast it.”*

— William James

## Connections

The MHC/MHZC's status as a department of Metro government gives us a unique opportunity to work with other municipal agencies. Among our ongoing efforts are the preservation of structures within Metro Parks, cooperating with the Metro Planning Commission in reviewing upcoming developments and updating the community plans, and working with the Codes Administration to monitor construction and renovation work on historic properties.

In cooperation with the Tennessee Historical Commission (the State Historic Preservation Office), we prepare nominations to the National Register of Historic Places, and review the effects of federally-funded or licensed projects through the Section 106 process. We also participate with the state and federal preservation programs through our partnership with the THC and the National Park Service as a Certified Local Government.

We are connected to the larger world of preservation through our association with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions, and the Society of Architectural Historians. Through our work with Tennessee Preservation Trust and Historic Nashville, Inc., we advocate for preservation education throughout the city and state.



## Sustainability

Economist Donovan Rypkema sums up sustainable development in five facts:

- 1) Sustainable development is crucial for economic development;
- 2) Sustainable development has more elements than just environmental responsibility;
- 3) “Green buildings” and sustainable development are NOT synonyms;
- 4) Historic preservation IS, in and of itself, sustainable development;
- 5) Development without a historic preservation component is NOT sustainable.

It is very important to understand that historic buildings are inherently sustainable.

Preservation maximizes the use of existing materials and infrastructure, reduces waste, and preserves the historic character of older cities and towns. In other words, sustainability begins with preservation.

